SARL YL Sprint

This is a fun activity to celebrate National Women's Day on 9 August. Call "YL Sprint!" the Sprint runs from 09:00 to 10:00 UTC (11:00 to 12:00 CAT).

It is a phone sprint on the 40-metre band (7 063 to 7 100 and 7 130 to 7 200 kHz). The exchange is a RS report and YL or OM.

Scoring - Contacts between YL stations are worth 5 points; contacts between YL and OM stations are worth 3 points, and contacts between OM stations are worth 1 point.

Log sheets and summaries shall be submitted within 7 days after the contest by e-mail to zs4bfn@netactive.co.za or zs4bfn@gmail.com. The closing date for log submissions is 16 August 2014.

CQ Southern Africa HF Contests

The aim of the HF Contests is for participants to contact as many amateurs in Southern Africa (refer to General Rules 1.b.) as possible on the 20, 40 and 80 m amateur bands.

HF Digital: the third Sunday in August - 17 August 2014 and HF CW: the last Sunday in August - 31 August 2014

The contests run from 13:00 to 16:30 UTC (15:00 to 18:30 CAT) on each Sunday. The following frequencies may be used.

HF Digital - 14 070 to 14 099 kHz; 7 040 to 7 060 kHz and 3 580 to 3 600 kHz

HF CW - 14 000 to 14 060 kHz; 7 000 to 7 040 kHz and 3 510 to 3 560 kHz

The following categories of participation are available - a) Single Operator Single Band; b) Single Operator All Band; c) Multi Operator Single Band or d) Multi Operator All Band. Individual competitors and club stations are encouraged to compete.

The exchange is a RST report and a consecutive serial number starting at 001.

CW and Digital contacts count 2 points. Count two points for each area (see below) on each band. Count 2 points for each stations contacted on all three bands. The call areas are - Area 1: ZS1 Western Cape; Area 2: ZS2 Eastern Cape; Area 3: ZS3 Northern Cape; Area 4: ZS4 Free State; Area 5: ZS5 KwaZulu-Natal; Area 6: ZS6 Gauteng, Mpumalanga; Limpopo and North West; Area 7: 3B8 Mauritius, 3DA Swaziland, 7P Lesotho, 7Q Malawi, C9 Mozambique, Z2 Zimbabwe, 5R Madagascar, FR Reunion Island and FH Mayotte, and Area 8: 9J Zambia, A2 Botswana, D2 Angola, V5 Namibia, ZD9 Gough and Tristan da Cunha Islands, ZS7 Antarctica

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"Mobile phone switched on and handheld transceiver switched on as well." DO7KAY

August

1 to 3 - Celebration of Flowers, Darling
3 - CQ South Africa HF Phone Contest; SARL Youth Net
8 to 10 - Wine and Food Festival, Hermanus
9 - National Women's day; SARL YL Sprint; SA on Tap Craft Beer Festival, Durban; Apiesdoring Festival Thabazimbi
12 - World Elephant Day
16 and 17 - International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend
17 - CQ South Africa Digital Contest
23 - Radio technology in Action in Johannesburg; Rotary Great Train Race, Middelburg
29 and 30 - Hantam Meat Festival, Calvinia
29 to 31 - Gauteng Getaway Show, JHB
31 - CQ South Africa CW Contest
28 Aug To 5 Sept - Clanwilliam Wild Flower Show

Current Summits-on-the-Air (SOTA) activities are announced at www.sotawatch.org
And more SOTA information can be found at www.sota.org.uk and www.zs4bfn.co.za/sota.asp

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and ZS8 Marion Island. Contacts with stations outside these areas are allowed, QSO points may be claimed but no zone or three-bander points may be claimed.

Awards. Certificates are awarded to the first three places and the highest single band score in each contest. There is also a trophy for the highest combined score in both contests. A trophy is awarded to the CW contestant in his or her first year of CW achieving the highest score. Candidates for this trophy shall state the date of the issue of the licence on the summary sheet.

Logs must be submitted to the Bloemfontein Amateur Radio Club by 10 August 2014 (Phone), 24 August 2014 (Digital) and 7 September 2014 (CW). Logs must be sent to zs4bfn@netactive.co.za or zs4bfn@gmail.com

Morse Code at 140 wpm

After reading an article in the Wall Street Journal about Chuck Adams, K7QO, who has a fascinating hobby - or two - I decided to contact him and find out the story for myself.

Chuck copies Morse code accurately at 140 words per minute (WPM), making him one of the fastest operators in the world. When contacted about his amazing feat he said the figure of 140 WPM is "probably misleading." Chuck explained, "There are three code speeds that I think any good CW operator should know and should know how to measure. Plain text with a 'mil' or keyboard. This is the way world records are done and also code tests, copying one minute without error out of five minutes of plain text from the hard copy generated. Code tests started out this way and then went to either a multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank test …before being discontinued.

Competitive CW

"Code competitions that I did as a teenager didn't allow typewriters, so it was done with pen and paper where I used to win at 40 - 45 WPM. To this day, I still do hard copy of every QSO that I have. At high speeds, I grab a typewriter, an electric one.

"Plain text without hard copy, also known as copying in your head, … is much more difficult to measure as you have to rely on what someone repeats back to you after a session. But this doesn't have to be 100% copy. There are guys who consistently carry on QSOs at 110 - 120 WPM, but those QSOs are disappearing from the bands. The third way is a computer program from RufzXP http://www.rufzxp.net/ which is where the 140,9 WPM comes from for me and the 200 WPM that two individuals did at the IARU competition in the European Union (EU). The program has a database of something like 45 000 radio amateur calls, mostly from contesters. You hear a call and type it into the program. If you get it right, the program sends another call at a faster speed and

continues to increase the speed for each correct call. If you miss then the next call is sent at a slower speed. Your score is determined by a number of factors: response time, correct calls or number of characters per call, etc. This program is the most frustrating thing you can do … and will drive anyone to drink in a hurry."

Chuck plays down his achievement, although he learned code in two evenings using an Instructograph paper tape machine. His father, W5NNB, took Chuck to a club meeting in Kermit, TX to find someone to teach him because he didn't feel his son would listen to him. Two already licensed teenagers Chuck's age took him under their wings that Wednesday and the following Thursday and Friday evenings Chuck memorized the code. His father dropped him off at Terry and Roy Acuff's home in Kermit on Saturday. When the dust was settled and the test over, Chuck had done 12 WPM.

He became interested in very high speeds in his senior year in high school. Working on 40 meters with a Heathkit Apache and an NC-300 receiver calling CQ at 45 WPM, he was confident until he received a message at 60 WPM. "I couldn't get them to QRS, so we didn't complete a QSO. I was so angry at the time that I told myself no one would ever do that to me again. So far, so good."

Is High Speed Code Worth It?

As with anything there are always questions and one question that comes to mind is if there is value in sending and receiving code at such high speeds. According to Chuck, "The bands might not hold up for long periods of time so you can get a lot done in a short period of time," something that would obviously be useful in an emergency situation when time is of the essence. But it seems almost impossible to get more than the gist of a message, much like speed reading where the text is skimmed. Chuck disagrees.

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"At higher speeds, it is my belief that you are as close as you can get to what I call the 'Vulcan Mind Meld.' You hear/see words in your mind instantly that came from another human mind miles away without consciously hearing the sounds from the speaker. When we talk to people we don't think about the sounds, but the ideas being given."

While it may sound like science fiction, Chuck's enthusiasm and stories make high speed code something worth achieving and a lot of fun. "I had one QSO at high speed my senior year in high school with a YL for 3,5 hours. I will never forget that one. I also had a QSO with a B-58 pilot who was in Little Rock, Arkansas and got scrambled on an alert; it was not a drill. Then the Cuban missile crisis was announced."

For those of you who have struggled with code, Chuck agrees that it's not easy and that "… you have to work at it to keep it. Use it or lost it." During World War II when the military trained Morse code operators, they trained for 16 weeks for about 8 hours a day. But Chuck says, "The U.S. government did it wrong. They used the old E - I - S - H sequence," which, in Chuck's opinion, is "… the worst thing you can do. It either consciously or subconsciously gets the individuals counting elements." He urges anyone learning code that way to "… please, please drop any code course that starts this way or uses some gimmick for memorisation … especially visual aids. This is a killer for code speed. Your mind learns to go through a couple of steps before getting the conversion done, and then you later have to unlearn the sequence. The only way to make sure code sticks with you is to "start with a regular daily schedule and stick with it. It's the only way to succeed in a reasonable time period." Chuck prefers the A - B - C - D sequence because "… it fairly well mixes up the patterns so that you don't compare them to similar letters." It's the way we all learned the alphabet in order to read.

CW — Simple, Inexpensive and Efficient

One of the good things about Morse code is that the equipment is so easy to build. "That's the way we did it in the 50s and 60s. We were all poor and a single-tube transmitter crystal-controlled rig (crystal-controlled rigs were a requirement for one-year Novices) was cheap and easy to build. Even today, you can buy a kit for a single band CW transceiver for $55 and add an additional $30 for case, etc. Use a wire antenna and a simple key and keyer and you are going like gangbusters. Those who say life is too short for QRP haven't got a clue and don't want the ranks to grow if they keep that attitude.

"Because Morse takes very little … it is a good use of bandwidth and it takes less power to be heard. I have been QRP for all my ham years, but will go to QRO power for the QRQ QSOs I'm about to take up. You can't do high speeds at QRP levels … unless it's line of sight."

Chuck says it's difficult to say whether Morse code will fall completely out of use. It is much more expensive to do the digital modes when you add in the cost of computer and software, but they are popular because you can sit down at the keyboard and have a mini-Internet on the air and no real concentration is required for long periods of time. However, since most young hams can't afford that kind of ham shack, starting out with a QRP (low power) CW rig gives them a chance to become active quickly. It's also something to think about for those hams on a budget or fixed income.

A Daily Measure of Morse Keeps the Mind Sharp

Morse code is a regular part of Chuck's life and not just in terms of going on the air. He also puts out a series of books on CD at different Morse code speeds http://www.k7qo.net/. He started the books almost twenty years ago to get plain text code for his daily practice when the AP and UPI wire services discontinued daily news transmissions via Morse to ships at sea. "I missed the practice and wanted something to work on to keep up my code speed. I had too much time and energy invested to let it slip away." Chuck uses a computer to translate books in the public domain to code because it gave him perfect spacing and was error free and could be done any time of the day.

"It was QRM/QRN/QSB free and a pleasure to do and I had lengthy sessions of continuous material. A complete book, such as *War of the Worlds*, is really a joy to work through and you don't have to worry about time of day and sunspot counts for a Morse practice session." He added that smaller MP3 players and iPods make it possible to carry practice with you. Chuck walks 10 km a day, getting in 2 hours of practice and there are side benefits to the con-

centration that comes with building code speed.

Chuck plays poker tournaments professionally that require intense concentration for 14 - 15 hours a day. "I really, really believe practicing Morse, which forces you to concentrate continually, helps keep the memory working well and might, just might, help keep one sharp. I have yet to run into any CW operator at any age who couldn't concentrate and seemed to hold onto information for a long time." Considering the current scientific data coming out about Alzheimer's disease, using Morse code on a daily basis might just be one way to combat the disease. This may be one case where more is better.

Whatever the reason for getting into high speed Morse code, one thing is certain; code is not going to go away any time soon. It's not easy for some people to master code, but, like anything worth doing, it is worth the effort. In the end, it's all about practice, time and more practice, but above all, "Patience, Grasshopper."

JM Cornwell, ACOCA, is a nationally syndicated freelance journalist, editor, book reviewer and award winning author whose recent work has been included in Cup of Comfort for Single Mothers and Chicken Soup for the Adopted Soul. She is also a Volunteer Examiner and newsletter editor for the Pikes Peak Radio Amateur Association (PPRAA) and holds an Extra class license.

African DX

C8, Mozambique. Operators Arnold, WB6OJB, and Frosty, K5LBU, will be active as C81AK and C81CF, respectively from Tenda Tora Lodge in Bilene (about 180 km north of Maputo) between 25 August and 2 September. They will have 2 rigs. Arnold, WB6OJB/C81AK, will be using a Kenwood TS-590 with a Expert 1K-FA amp into a NA4RR hex beam at about 40 feet. Frosty, K5LBU/C81CF, will be using a Yaesu FT-450 with 100 watts into a R7 vertical. Operations will be on 40 to 10 metres. Arnold will be operating on SSB and some CW, while Frosty will be operating on some PSK and possibly RTTY. QSL via their home call signs and LoTW.

TJ, Cameroon. Nicolas, F8FQX (ex 5T5SN, TN5SN) will be staying in Cameroon during the next 3 to 4 years. He hopes to get on the air as TJ3SN on HF and 6 m. QSL via IZ1BZV direct and LoTW.

African Islands

EA8, Canary Islands. Celebrating the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Gran Telescopio Canarias, the largest optical telescope in the world, special event call sign AN8GTC will be used from the observatory at Roque de los Muchachos on La Palma, Canary Islands (AF-004) on 9 and 10 August. Several stations will operate CW, SSB and digital modes on all bands. QSL via EA8RCP.

D44, Cape Verde. Carlo, ON4BR, will be active as D44TLO from Windward Islands (aka Barlavento) between 16 and 23 August. Activity will be on 40 to 10 metres using CW. QSL via his home call sign.

ZD8, Ascension Island. Steve, G3ZVW, will once again be active as ZD8N from Georgetown between 21 and 29 August. Activity will be on 80 to 10 metres using CW, SSB and the Digital modes. Look for him during the evenings, early mornings, and over the weekend. QSL via his home call sign, by the Bureau or direct

VQ9 Chagos Archipelago. Bob, N7XR (www.n7xr.net) will be active as VQ9XR from Diego Garcia (AF-006), Chagos Archipelago "on or about 25 August for three weeks". He will operate CW, RTTY and SSB on 160 to 10 metres. QSL via N7XR, direct only; neither bureau nor LoTW. Log search and OQRS on Club Log.

EF8, Canary Islands. Juan, EA8RM, will be active as EF8U from the Las Palmas Contest Club radio station (EA8URL) on Gran Canaria Island (AF-004) during the CQ WW DX CW (29 and 30 November) as a Single-Op/All-Band entry. QSL via LoTW or direct to EA8URE.

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Sailing Around the World - Rainer, DB1RL, and his partner Gisela will embark on a round the world sailing trip, starting in August. They estimate about 2 years to complete the tour, and have their boat equipped with a rig providing HF operations on SSB and Pactor. For route details and up-to-date information see the website at http://weltumsegelung.cc/

Contest Calendar

This week's contests compiled by Bruce Horn, WA7BNM. The period covered is 4 to 11 August 2014

ARS Spartan Sprint
01:00 - 03:00 UTC 5 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m
Classes: Skinny; Tubby
Max power: 5 watts
Exchange: RST, state, province or country and power
Work stations: Once per band
Submit logs by: 7 August 2014
E-mail logs to: spartansprint@yahoo.com
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at: http://www.arsqrp.blogspot.com/

CWops Mini-CWT Test
13:00 - 14:00 UTC, 19:00 - 20:00 UTC 6 August and 03:00 - 04:00 UTC 7 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m
Classes: Single Op – QRP, low or high
Max power: HP: >100 watts; LP: 100 watts; QRP: 5 watts
Exchange: Member: Name and member no; non-Member: Name and state, province or country
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO
Multipliers: Each call once
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by: 04:00 UTC 9 August 2014
Post log summary at: http://www.hornucopia.com/3830score/
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at: http://www.cwops.org/cwt.html

QRP Fox Hunt
01:00 – 0230 UTC 7 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 20 m Only
Classes: Single Op – fox or hound
Max power: 5 watts
Exchange: RST, state, province or country, name and power output
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO

Multipliers: (none)
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points
Submit logs by: 02:30 UTC 8 August 2014
E-mail logs to: (see rules)
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at:
http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org/summer_rules.htm

NCCC RTTY Sprint
01:45 - 02:15 UTC 8 August
Mode: RTTY
Bands: (see rules)
Classes: (none)
Exchange: (see rules)
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by: 10 August 2014
E-mail logs to: (none)
Post log summary at: http://www.3830scores.com/
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at: http://www.ncccsprint.com/rttyns.html

NCCC Sprint Ladder
02:30 - 03:00 UTC 8 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20 m
Classes: Single Op
Max power: 100 watts
Exchange: (see rules)
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: NA station: 1 point per QSO; non-NA station: 1 point per QSO with an NA station
Multipliers: Each US state (including KL7 and KH6) once per band; Each VE province once per band; Each North American country (except W/VE) once per band
Score Calculation: Total score = total QSO points x total mults
Submit logs by: 10 August 2014
E-mail logs to: (none)
Post log summary at: http://www.3830scores.com
Mail logs to: (none)

HF Happenings

Find rules at: http://www.ncccsprint.com/rules.html

WAE DX CW Contest
00:00 UTC 9 August to 23:59 UTC 10 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 m
Classes: Single Op – high or low; Multi-Op; SWL
Max operating hours: Single Op: 36 hours, off times of at least 60 minutes; Multi-Op: 48 hours
Max power: HP: >100 Watts; LP: 100 Watts
Exchange: RST and serial no
Work stations: Once per band
Score Calculation: (see rules)
Submit logs by: 25 August 2014
E-mail logs to: waecw@dxhf.darc.de
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at: http://www.darc.de/referate/dx/contest/waedc/en/rules/

SKCC Weekend Sprintathon
12:00 UTC 9 August to 24:00 UTC 10 August
Mode: CW
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 m
Classes: (none)
Max operating hours: 24
Exchange: RST, name, state, province or country and SKCC no or "NONE"
Work stations: Once per band
QSO Points: 1 point per QSO
Bonus Points: (see rules)
Multipliers: Each state, province, or country once
Score Calculation: Total score = (total QSO points x total mults) and bonus points

Submit logs by: 17 August 2014
Post log summary at: http://wes.m0trn.com/submission.php
Mail logs to: (none)
Find rules at: http://www.skccgroup.com/operating_activities/weekend_sprintathon/

Maryland-DC QSO Party
1600Z 9 August to 04:00 UTC 10 August and 1600Z-24:00 UTC 10 August
Mode: CW, Phone, Digital
Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2, 432
Classes: Standard; Mobile; Club; QRP
Exchange: MDC: entry class and county; non-MDC: entry class and state, province or country
Work stations: Once per band per mode
QSO Points: 10 points per QSO with club station; 5 points per QSO with mobile station; 4 points per QSO with QRP station; 3 points per QSO with CW/digital station; 1 point per QSO for all other stations; Bonus: 50 points for at least one QSO with W3VPR
Multipliers: MDC: Each MD county, DC, Baltimore City, once only; MDC: Each state (other than MD), VE province and country once only; non-MDC: Each MD county, DC, Baltimore City, once only
Score Calculation: Total score = (total QSO points x total mults) and bonus points
Submit logs by: 9 September 2014
E-mail logs to: MDQSOP@w3vpr.org
Mail logs to: MDC QSO Party, PO Box 308, Davidsonville, MD 21035, USA
Find rules at: http://mdcqsoparty.w3vpr.org/Documents/Maryland_QSO_Party_Rules_2014.pdf

Next Weeks Contests

NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint, 00:30 - 02:30 UTC 13 August
CWops Mini-CWT Test, 13:00 UTC-14:00 UTC 13 August, 19:00 UTC-20:00 UTC 13 August, 03:00 UTC-04:00 UTC 14 August
RSGB 80 m Club Sprint, CW, 19:00 UTC-20:00 UTC 13 August
QRP Fox Hunt, 01:00 UTC-02:30 UTC 14 August
NCCC RTTY Sprint, 01:45 UTC-02:15 UTC 15 August
NCCC Sprint Ladder, 02:30 UTC-03:00 UTC 15 August
SARTG WW RTTY Contest, 00:00 – 08:00 UTC, 16:00 - 24:00 UTC 16 August, 08:00 – 16:00 UTC 17 August
Russian District Award Contest, 08:00 UTC 16 August to 08:00 UTC 17 August
Keyman's Club of Japan Contest, 12:00 UTC 16 August to 12:00 UTC 17 August
North American SSB QSO Party, 18:00 UTC 16 August to 05:59 UTC 17 August
CVA DX Contest, CW, 21:00 UTC 16 August to 21:00 UTC 17 August
SARL HF Digital Contest, 13:00 – 16:30 UTC 17 August
ARRL Rookie Roundup, RTTY, 18:00 - 23:59 UTC 17 August
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest, 01:00 - 03:00 UTC 18 August

SOTA ZS/EC-002 Kompasberg

Andrew, ZS2G, says, "Hi Everyone,

Unfortunately our attempt at doing the SOTA activation was unsuccessful due to the high winds, as Tony, ZR2TX, kindly mentioned. The group leader would not let us proceed up the very steep part of the Kompasberg for safety reasons.

A few of us are planning to operate from Lady's Slipper, ZS/EC-016, early one Sunday morning in the near future. We'll make an announcement on the SARL forum a bit closer to the time. The radio will run 20 Watts SSB on 40 m and 4 Watts FM on 2 m.

Dave, ZS2DH, Mandy, ZS2AV, and myself hope to activate Ben Macdhui, ZS/EC-001 over the Dec 2015 / Jan 2016 period , so as to each get in two activations (20 points). That could be an extra 60 points for the chasers!"
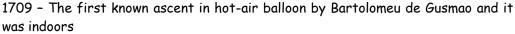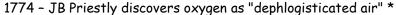

Ben Macdhui is a 3 001 metre mountain in the Eastern Cape. It was named after Ben Macdhui in Scotland. It is the highest peak entirely within the Eastern Cape, KwaDuma is higher, but it lies on the border with Lesotho.

History this Week, week starting 4 August 2014

1181 – A Supernova observed by Chinese and Japanese astronomers
1709 – The first known ascent in hot-air balloon by Bartolomeu de Gusmao and it was indoors
1774 – JB Priestly discovers oxygen as "dephlogisticated air" *
1795 - The first example of written Afrikaans, in a poem, is found
1815 - The massive volcanic eruption of Mount Tambora was the most powerful in 1 600 years
1829 – The "Stourbridge Lion" locomotive goes into service in England
1831 – The first US steam engine train run from Albany to Schenectady, NY
1884 - Walvis Bay becomes part of the Cape Colony, while Germany declares the Lüderitz area a protectorate
1909 - SOS used for the first time by an American ship at Arapahoe off Cape Hatteras, NC
1919 – The first air flight over a major body of water in Australia by Harry Butler
1945 – An Atom Bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan on 6 August
1956 – The first motorcycle rode over 200 mph – done by Wilhelm Herz at 210 mph or 338 kph
1959 - Explorer 6 transmits first TV photo of Earth from space

* Deprived of 'phlogiston'. Oxygen was originally called dephlogisticated air by Joseph Priestley. Burn a log in the fireplace, air carries off the phlogiston, and the dephlogisticated log reveals itself as a pile of ashes.
http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dephlogisticated

HF Happenings

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